



Visual Artist April Hale: Jewelry/adornment, sculpture

"Similar to a mad scientist, I combine materials that are not connected in nature," writes April Hale. "Seeds, bones, animal skins, found objects and felted wool are locally derived materials that I use as metaphors for the life cycle, wilderness, and human/wild interaction." The artist says innovation takes the form of constant evolution, based on her artistic progress and connections to place.

Although the adornment and sculpture are fragile, and often on the verge of decomposition, the pieces "simultaneously carry the potential to renew life through the seeds from which they are constructed and the decomposition that threatens the integrity of the work."

"Although I am formally trained as a metalsmith, I have ceased to limit myself to creating adornment from metal and other permanent materials. I now embrace those plant and animal parts that I find in my local ecosystem. This shift toward more ephemeral, locally derived materials better communicates my artistic goals of questioning our role in the life cycle and gaining an understanding of place."

Hale believes her work is also innovative within the field of contemporary jewelry. "I am questioning both the traditional materials and the ideas of permanence usually assumed to be important aspects of adornment. I make jewelry because, by putting it on our bodies, it inherently serves as a representation of our personalities and lifestyles."

Panelists felt Hale's work was extremely original, and appreciated her approach in questioning a commitment to land and wilderness and what it means to be "native." They felt her sample work showed an extreme awareness of dialogues in contemporary art. They responded to how she is challenging issues of permanence and definitions of beauty, and noted the care with which she prepares and shows her images. Panelists described her as "a natural history explorer currently inhabiting the body of an artist."